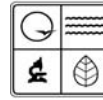


# Merchandise Mart Building

1000 Washington Avenue, St. Louis



Missouri  
Department of  
Natural Resources

## BACKGROUND

This Romanesque Revival building was built in 1888-89 for local tobacco company magnates John E. Liggett and George S. Myers from plans by Isaac Taylor of St. Louis. Listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, the Merchandise Mart received its name from a dry goods wholesale business that occupied it in the 1940s and 1950s during the height of Washington Avenue's Garment District years. The seven-story 340,000 square foot building had been vacant since around 1984 and was threatened by demolition until a restoration plan was approved in 2001.



## CONTAMINANTS

Lead based paint and asbestos-containing material was present throughout the structure. Approximately 200 square feet of staining was observed on the basement floor that exhibited the odor of hydraulic oil. Several rusted 55-gallon drums were discovered in the basement along with the distinctive odor of dry cleaning solvents. PCBs were also present in the building.



## **ASSISTANCE**

The Merchandise Mart Building received a Danforth Foundation loan of \$900,000. The sale of Federal Historic Tax Credits and Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits generated \$12.2 million. State Historic Tax Credits were sold for \$8.8 million, and Brownfields State Remediation Tax Credits generated \$1.6 million for total tax credit equity of \$22.6 million. In addition, the City of St. Louis is providing full tax abatement on improvements until 2013.

## **PROTECTION**

82 cubic yards of asbestos-containing material were removed and disposed of along with 710 pounds of lead-based paint, 270,220 pounds of sandblast grit, and 460 gallons of hazardous materials. Some lead-based paint remains encapsulated or sealed in place on-site.

## **INVESTMENT AND RESULTS**

The City also invested \$17.5 million in streetscape renovation to double the width of the sidewalks to 18 feet for a six-block stretch between Tucker and 18th Streets and install new streetlights and planters. The significant public infrastructure improvement in the area has helped stimulate similar restoration projects throughout the neighborhood.

## **TIMELINE**

Application Received: 28 November 2000

RAP Approved: 21 June 2001

Remediation Started: 22 June 2001

Construction Started: October 2001

Completion Certificate: 10 February 2003

## **REDEVELOPMENT SUMMARY**

The Merchandise Mart Building is now home to 213 apartments and street level retail. Forty percent of the apartments are income-based apartments, eligible only for residents earning less than the median income in St. Louis. Among the retail development is major restaurant Kitchen K on the northeast side of the building. The estimated project cost for Kitchen K was \$1 million. Merchandise Mart is also home to the Lee J. Clothing Store that had an estimated development cost of \$250,000.

